

BARON HAUSSMANN.

THE death of Baron Haussmann, the famous Prefect of the Seine under the Second Empire, comes at a peculiarly impressive moment for the British ratepayer. It finds him in a deadly struggle with a thaw, after a deadly struggle with a frost. It is impossible in such a crisis not to think of him who has passed away, and to wish that Liberty would teach us how to counterfeit such products of despotism. Baron Haussmann made Paris the typical city of the West, and it was part of his plan to have the place kept clean. If he could have seen most of the streets of London during the past month, he would have stood in hourly expectation of riot. Only free institutions have the privilege of such indifference, and of such neglect. The Baron swept Paris as well as rebuilt it; if he had treated it for one day as our vestries have treated London for more than a month, his master's throne would have tottered to a premature fall.

It is hard to repress the unavailing sigh at the thought of what such a man would have done for us. Improvements that we boggle over for years, he would have taken as an incident of a morning's work. He would have removed the south side of Holywell Street with one stroke of the pen. He would have had the same side of Fleet Street down and up again, in one swift and merciful operation, saving tens of thousands to the collective wealth of the country. He would have driven great cross boulevards from North to South to bind the Strand to Holborn, and Holborn to the Euston Road. As it is, most of our great roads run only East and West, and we have still to thread our way through devious paths from one to the other. Tell a cabman to drive fast from St. Dunster's Church to the North-Western, and how is it to be done? Fetter Lane is the neck of a bottle, choked at all times with heavy waggons and with printers' trucks. Chancery Lane is another neck, suffocating with omnibuses. Drury Lane is out of the question; and, though Lincoln's Inn Fields is wide enough, its approaches are mere practical jokes. Wellington Street follows; and, just because it gives a promise of breadth, it is always in a state of congestion. Between that and the new roads by Charing Cross, there is nothing but a network of business slums.

It is the same in the whole line of thoroughfares further north, that stretch between Gray's Inn and Tottenham Court Road. What mortal man was ever helped in his extremity by Brownlow Street, Holborn? Who was ever much the better for the lower end of Southampton Row, where it joins Holborn in another narrow street? The London puzzle is to find your way from North to South. It is impossible to take it in a clear, clean, unimpeded course. Your cabman winds through it as a ferret winds through a rat-hole in a barn. He gives and takes—backs a little to avoid the avalanche of a Pickford's van, shaves the axle of another cabby by just a hair's breadth. How he gets through the barred squares and streets that still lie between him and his goal is his own secret. It is done at last, but only at a woful cost in time.

The good Baron would have set all this right in a twelvemonth, allowing that time for his demolitions and his new alignments, though of course taking somewhat more to rebuild. The French did not invent the proverb that "Time is money": it was the achievement of our race. The honour of the invention seems enough for us: we never act on it in this part of our public life. By-and-bye, the great civic statistician, who is still in embryo in some part of our social system, will come forward with an exact calculation of how much London loses by a single day of narrow thoroughfares complicated by mud. Every cab and 'bus eastwards delayed at least fifteen minutes on its passage to the Bank; every personal operation in stocks and company promotion hindered by at least that time; every railway journey

out of London lengthened to the same extent; the delay, by reason of horseflesh and axle-trees come to grief—it would make an appalling total! The late frost must have cost us something in thousands every hour. The vestries chuckled at the thought that, by leaving the roads like looking-glass, they were saving us something in hundreds or in tens. But the poor tradespeople, whose shops were deserted for weeks, could surely tell where the pinch of false economy falls.

The Baron would not have endured this for a moment. It would have been more than his place was worth, because it would have been more than the worth of his master's. He wrought for a people who will have cleanliness in the public thoroughfares, because cleanliness sets off beauty; and who will have beauty, because that is a want of their Latin souls. This last made the need sufficiently imperious; but, in the case of Paris, it may be added that both the beauty and the cleanliness were expected to pay. The dream was to make Paris the show city of civilisation, the city in which everyone who had the wherewithal must perforce live. Paris under the Empire was rebuilt as one vast exhibition. It was to have the best of everything, including wickedness. Its streets, its houses, its hotels, its opera, and the rest of it, were to be all that money could make them. Persons who had made their fortunes were to flock thither from all parts of the earth to spend them. That did not exactly come to pass. Other capitals learned the trick of restoration. Vienna has risen from the ashes of its antiquity of late years, and it runs Paris hard. London has not stood still. Berlin tries never to pause day or night. There is a new Rome. Most of these changes were unforeseen when Baron Haussmann began to build; and, for want of foreseeing them, Paris has a good deal of luxury on its hands for which it cannot always find a customer. Hence the angry decrees against foreigners, or projects of decrees, which from time to time belie the good repute for hospitality of an amiable people. It is not that there are too many foreigners, but that there are too few of the right sort. France does not want the industrious poor—Italian navvies, British coachmen, and German waiters. It wants *grands seigneurs*, mythical *milords*, Yankee silver kings, *rastaquouères* from South America, who throw silver out of the window, and keep the whole merry-go-round on the move. When they do not come in sufficient abundance, Paris grows sulky, abuses the foreign devils, and talks of a tax.

But Haussmann conferred one inestimable service: he made the city delightful for its own inhabitants. They hardly know what they owe him for that sense of joyousness which comes over the wayfarer who has the Boulevards and the Champs Élysées for a daily promenade. If he did not plan these thoroughfares, he rendered them what they are. His first and his last duty was to make the city beautiful. Only a city inhabited by such a race could have endured the sacrifices which that commission entailed. The French have become sensitive to ugliness by the influence of centuries of art. Beauty is a thing in demand with them. Their vestrymen, if they had such things, would talk of it; their cabmen go to see the new statue or the new fountain, and its effect exercises an influence on the elections. The very lamp-posts of the Haussmann régime are works of taste—bronzes flowered in base and column—and they are kept in condition by careful washing and polishing once a week. The final test of our new Municipal life will be its power of producing a Haussmann by the methods of freedom. One day he will surely come, and then the streets will be bright and gay. There will be no more Euston Road, no more Gower Street; a walk down Baker Street will be a frolic; and the children will sing songs to springtime in the gardens of Trafalgar Square.

THE LATE LADY TAYLOR.

THE death of Lady Taylor breaks one of the last links between the present generation and the brilliant and intellectual society of the early Victorian era. Indeed, so long and closely was her life linked with that of her poet-husband, Sir Henry Taylor, who was her senior by nearly a score of years, that the recollection of her name seems to carry back the mind to the days of the last George and the last William, in which her husband figured as no inconsiderable personage, both in the world of affairs and the world poetic; for there *was* a world poetic in those days, and the poets who composed it were celebrities of whom the world at large took note—not like most of the versifiers of our own day, huddled together in a single club, unpraised and unread by anyone save themselves.

Henry Taylor had the amiable weakness of pretending that he knew nobody, was not in society, and had never been in society—that he was a humble scribe possessed of a poetic soul, who, whenever he could escape from the drudgery of earning his bread, loved nothing so much as the solitude of his bleak Northern home, and converse with those of his own kin. But it is self-evident that a man, who felt entitled to claim the young and beautiful daughter of a Cabinet Minister for his wife, and to request Mr. Gladstone to remove his doubts as to the truth of the Christian religion, was no ordinary Government clerk, as he would have had the world believe. In truth and in fact, he seems at one time or another to have known all that was worth knowing in the best, if not in the highest, circles of English life; and to have exercised a degree of authority within his official province which amounted almost to an autocracy, and would hardly be possible in these days of press and parliamentary inquisitiveness. For eight-and-forty years he ruled the West Indies as the Tzar rules All the Russias. A list of the Taylor family-friendships would begin with the Berrys, Southey and Wellington, and end with Robert Louis Stevenson and John Dillon. Nor would there be wanting in the interval many names which the world itself will care to remember, excepting perhaps the great Bohemians of the past, as may be judged from an odd letter which Sir James Stephen once wrote to Taylor wherein he laid it down that it was as impossible that Bacon could have known Shakespeare, as it was that he (Taylor) should know Mark Lemon!

Lady Taylor was a daughter of the Right Honourable Thomas Spring-Rice, successively Secretary of State for the Colonies and Chancellor of the Exchequer in Lord Melbourne's first administration, and afterwards first Baron Monteagle. Sir Henry Taylor himself has told us the story of how he aspired to the hand of his official master's daughter, attracted, not so much by her exquisite beauty, as by her enthusiasm for his poetic master, Wordsworth—of how his hopes made shipwreck from an objection arising out of his own defective religious belief—of how he placed himself in the hands of Sir James Stephen (not the present one) and Mr. Gladstone, with a view to his conversion—and how he was finally accepted on the profession of a creed which, he implies, was based upon Abraham Tucker's "Lights of Nature and Gospel Lights Blended." We are not acquainted with this work, but its title suggests a somewhat low level of dogmatic orthodoxy; and it is plain that Sir Henry Taylor must have made a considerable advance upon his first somewhat perfunctory profession of Christianity, for not only are his later writings suffused with much religious feeling, but in his later years he occasionally took an active part in the ecclesiastical polemics of the neighbourhood in which he lived. He has also told the world that his marriage did not afford one of the common instances of two families coming together and immediately cutting one another. His wife's friends became his friends, and his friends became hers. She was well equipped, both by

culture, manner, and wit, to hold her own among the men and women to whom he introduced her. In spirit she was ever young and buoyant—never extolling the past in comparison with the present, but always ready to find out some new thing that was good, and rejoicing in and proclaiming the discovery.

It would take a column of this journal to enumerate the men and women whose genius or worth the Taylors were amongst the first to perceive. When, at last, their long union of forty-seven years was dissolved by Sir Henry Taylor's sudden and painless death, Lady Taylor gave an example of how widowhood should be borne in the spirit of Christian stoicism. After a fitting period of retirement, all the old interests and friendships were revived, and new and distinctive activities developed. Sir Henry Taylor's politics were, to say the least of it, conspicuous for their moderation. There was much in public affairs and the development of the press which irritated him profoundly. For example, of Mr. Robert Lowe, whom he met at Harriet Lady Ashburton's, he once wrote that he knew nothing against him except his connection with the press. Even his profound attachment and reverence for Mr. Gladstone could not wholly reconcile him to that statesman's anti-Turkish activities. But Lady Taylor, as a widow, was under none of the limitations which the prejudices of an official position had imposed on her husband's mind. In the last year of her life, she and her daughters were as profoundly interested in finding a Radical candidate for Christchurch, in Hampshire, as ever her husband was in obtaining a literary pension for an unlucky poet. As an example of how far she was in touch with actuality, it may be mentioned that she took a lively interest in the founding of our respected contemporary the *Star*, and the various changes in its editorship and direction. In her enthusiasm for Home Rule, she extended her friendship to many of "the Boys," whilst at the same time not loosening her hold on the old friendships amongst the great body of "Cultchah." At her dinners she used to beg that politics might not be talked after the ladies were gone, "for you're just evenly divided, and once you begin I know I shall find you tearing one another's hair." Her charity and kindness were as widespread as her religious feelings were profound; and we believe we express a feeling which will be universal among that large number of her friends who are also readers of ours, when we say that we should have been failing in duty, if we had not put on record this slight tribute to the memory of a very remarkable woman.

THE NEW ANTI-JACOBIN.

MR. FREDERICK GREENWOOD'S return to the editorial chair is a matter for universal congratulation. It is no presumption on his part to remind the public of his services to journalism. He edited the *Pall Mall Gazette* for sixteen years, and it is not easy to forget the brilliancy with which he harried the declining days of the first Gladstone Cabinet. He founded the *St. James's Gazette*, and his withdrawal from that paper nearly four years ago deprived the Tory clubs of the only intellectual stimulus they ever had. Mr. Greenwood was never a partisan in the vulgar sense. He viewed with small approval many of the concessions which a Tory Government must make in order to maintain a precarious life. He opposed the Local Government Act for England and Scotland with all his might, and during his temporary retirement he has made vigorous onslaughts on the Unionist alliance. Such a man is not likely to be deceived by Mr. Chamberlain's juggle about a "National Party," and he has not attempted to conceal his suspicions that the makeshift compact which keeps the present Government in office is insidiously sapping the integrity of Tory principles. Any scheme of local government for Ireland is regarded by Mr. Greenwood with candid

disgust, and he has not hesitated to intimate in the plainest language that the smallest concession in this direction must be perilous to the Union. It might be expected, therefore, that the new weekly journal which Mr. Greenwood is about to launch would be chiefly designed to form a rallying-point for those Tories who contemplate with alarm the incapacity of a Tory Government to do nothing. Mischievous activity is, in Mr. Greenwood's eyes, the besetting vice of this Administration; and he might adopt as a motto for his new paper the maxim that the statesman who legislates is lost. The title of *Anti-Jacobin* is quite in keeping with this spirit. Mr. Greenwood need not apologise for inviting comparisons with the famous print for which Canning is better remembered than for any act of his public life. The wit of the old *Anti-Jacobin* may even be surpassed by its successor, for, to tell the truth, the sallies of the journal which had to be suppressed because Wilberforce was alarmed by its violence, were more frequently clumsy than expert. "The Friend of Humanity and the Knife-Grinder" survives as the best specimen of Canning's satirical genius, but Praed wrote many things quite as good, and Canning's prose style is far inferior to Fonblanque's political articles in the *Examiner*. Mr. Traill's satires in verse are equal to anything in the Canning era. But when a *littérateur* becomes a statesman his literary achievements are often exaggerated. Should Mr. Greenwood secure the co-operation of Mr. W. H. Smith, the First Lord's reputation as a wit will be considerably enhanced.

Judging, however, from Mr. Greenwood's prospectus, the new *Anti-Jacobin* is not to have the courage of its name. "Political affairs will occupy a comparatively small space in its pages," and—more surprising still—it will be written "in no high Tory vein, but in the spirit of true Liberalism." This savours of Birmingham, and of the speeches in which we are constantly assured that the Unionists are the only Liberals. When they want to persuade us that they are the party of progress, Tories are in the habit of pointing to the very legislation which Mr. Greenwood has vigorously denounced. They have set up a system of county government which, according to Mr. Greenwood, means the ultimate transfer of local authority to the Jacobins. So, if the "true Liberalism" is opposed to such measures, where is the everyday Tory to repose the sole of his foot? Perhaps, in his bewilderment, he may venture to question Mr. Greenwood's authority as a maker of party names. He may even suspect that Jacobinism, as a term of reproach, is as unintelligible as the distinction between the "true Liberalism" and the "high Tory vein." He may remember that the *Times* the other day fell into an inglorious muddle by declaring that Home Rule would hand Ireland over to a "priest-ridden" Parliament and a "Jacobin tyranny," as if Jacobinism were another name for Popery. If he looks back to Canning's definition, he will find that Jacobinism used to mean hostility to "the office and person of a king," and to Christianity and law, that it "openly threatens the foundations of States and saps the foundations of domestic happiness," and that it aimed at the supremacy of France and the subjugation of Britain. But what, in Mr. Greenwood's judgment, does it mean now? Nothing more than that which utilises "the natural impatience of the poor, a kindly but erring sentimentalism, and the corruptions and confusions of the older parties in the State." People who fancy that a Jacobin must be in his mildest mood at least a robber and a regicide, will scarcely be content with Mr. Greenwood's description. Canning asserted that the Jacobins never gave anything in charity, but profited by the discontent of the starving; and a good deal of the humour of the old *Anti-Jacobin* is a burlesque of sympathy with poverty. But the new *Anti-Jacobin* admits that the poor have a "natural impatience," and proposes

that schemes for the amelioration of their lot shall be resisted in "the spirit of true Liberalism." For we know what "erring sentimentalism" represents in Mr. Greenwood's vocabulary. We know that General Booth's enterprise is opposed by many, not on the ground of his alleged incompetence, but because it is feared that the "submerged tenth" may be turned into "rampant Socialists." Any great effort, however organised, to reclaim the dregs of society, to prevent the "natural impatience of the poor" from turning to sullen hatred of all above them, or to make wealth pay a fairer tribute to the general exchequer, is liable to be treated as one of the disguises of the Jacobinism which "has made a second appearance in English politics."

When Mr. Greenwood founded the *St. James's Gazette* he called it an "Anti-Radical" paper, and he would have done well to adhere to that terminology, instead of unearthing from the dry ditch of ancient Toryism a musty name which has no present significance. It is just as absurd to call English Radicals Jacobins as it was for Mr. Chamberlain to call them Nihilists. Mr. Greenwood proposes to treat "the older parties in the State" as if their "corruptions and confusions" were aids to an enemy that is independent of both of them. A Liberal Government plays the game of Jacobinism directly, and a Tory Government plays it indirectly. That, in brief, is the lesson Mr. Greenwood would teach us. The answer is that his *Anti-Jacobin*, and his "true Liberalism," and the rest of his political apparatus, are simply disguises of the old Tory spirit which has wrecked many reforms and delayed many more. But as it will be no small part of Mr. Greenwood's mission to lecture his friends in the Government, his reproofs are certain to be livelier reading than the servile banalities of his Tory contemporaries. He will increase the general entertainment even more if he will imitate Canning's self-sacrifice, and decline to receive advertisements. "Our earnest desire," said the old *Anti-Jacobin* in its first number, "is not to lessen the circulation of any existing public print." If Mr. Greenwood is animated by a similar spirit, his forbearance ought to be specially appreciated by the *Anti-Jacobin* editors of some existing reviews.

MATRIMONY, THE MUSE, AND THE MAGAZINES.

THE *Forum*, as a great many people know, is a monthly magazine, or review, published in New York. It may not be opened with the ordinary paper-cutter, being tightly fastened with wire clamps: but, like many other fruits of the transatlantic Hesperides, must be won by the sardine-knife. Within the *Forum* American Culture mews—or should it be mia-ows?—its mighty youth, and tells of its "formative influences"; and this month "Prof. Edmund Gosse" and "Eliza Lynn Linton" help the young creature along by wanting to know if Verse is in Danger, and what is the meaning of the Revolt against Matrimony. In England, of course, everything is in danger, and will be, as long as the monthly reviews come out: but for an ardent and quick-blooded nation that has been accustomed to take its Muses when it finds them ("free of authorial expenses"), and has just induced the Mormons to give up polygamy, these appear to be odd questions.

Mr. Gosse asserts that in poetry "the activity of the dead is now paramount, and threatens to paralyse original writing altogether. . . Every poetic writer of any age precedent to our own has now a chance of popularity, often a very much better chance than he possessed during his own lifetime." And he asks, "In this great throng of resuscitated souls, all of whom have forfeited their copyright, how is the modern poet to exist? . . . At every turn the thronging company of the ghosts impedes and disheartens the modern writer, and it is no

wonder if the new Orpheus throws down his lyre in despair when the road to his desire is held by such an invincible army of spectres." Now if we are to identify "Prof. Edmund Gosse" with the Mr. Edmund Gosse who has just earned our gratitude by resuscitating the ghost of Thomas Beddoes, we must note some lack of consistency. But if poesy be sick in these days, prophecy is hale and hearty (If only there had been magazines in the reign of King Hezekiah!), and Mr. Gosse abandons himself to the "vain pleasure" of prophesying concerning the future of verse. One or two probabilities, he says, loom before us. Let us take a couple—(1) Poetry will deal, to a greater degree than ever, with the subtler shades of emotion. It will interpret what Prose dares not suggest. It will treat all the complexities of human emotion, from exultation to despair. And (2) a new species of Poetry will arise to celebrate "the social revolution or evolution which most sensible people are now convinced is imminent." It will be democratic to a degree at present unimaginable. Kings, princesses, and the symbols of chivalry will perish out of this new species and their places will be taken, we suppose, by the free citizens and the productive labourer.

Now of (1) it may be remarked that Mr. Gosse is merely stating a counsel of perfection. As soon as poetry can express all the complexities of emotion, it must cease to grow. Its work will be done. But if he means that poetry will *strive* to express these complex emotions, we answer that it has been doing so ever since its birth, and that Mr. Gosse has all his life been reading verse that had this aim, though, it would seem, he did not recognise it. We believe as profoundly as Mr. Gosse in the future of poetry, for this reason—that the complexity of human emotion has not, as Mr. Gosse appears to think, done with growth, but increases every day; that it will always need poetry to disentangle new intricacies; and that poetry will always be struggling to do so, yet will always remain as far as ever in arrears with its task. Should it ever catch up with man's emotion, on that day it will perish.

But it is really too bad of Mr. Gosse to prophesy (2) the new Democratic Poetry to the Americans, and dismiss Walt Whitman with the brief remark that his language is "bastard jargon." For whether Whitman write "bastard jargon" or not, this much is certain—that Whitman, many years ago, not only foresaw but actually founded this species of poetry the advent of which Mr. Gosse so fondly proclaims as imminent. When Whitman says—

"I speak the pass-word primeval—I give the sign of democracy;
By God! I will accept nothing which all cannot have their counter-
part of on the same terms,"

—it is allowable, perhaps, to call this "jargon." Or take again Whitman's attack on the models of modern American literature because they all "have had their birth in courts and basked and grown in castle sunshine; all smell of prince's favours. Of workers of a certain sort we have, indeed, plenty, contributing after their kind; many elegant, many learned, all complacent. But touched by the national test or tried by the standards of Democratic personality, they wither to ashes." Here again it is permissible to quarrel with his language. But still the prophecy is Walt Whitman's, and if the Americans won't listen to Walt Whitman; if they prefer the voice of W. D. Howells prattling in *Harper's* the praises of their national literature; then they had best be left to work out their salvation.

Then comes Mrs. Lynn Linton, superfluous, but talking yet, because she made her reputation some time ago by abusing her own sex, and a reputation must be maintained. "The free lovers and dissolutionists have had their say," she says. Why, so they have, and the echoes have died out long since, and Matrimony is not one penny the worse. Would not the best course, therefore, be to forget the "Revolt against Matrimony" as a small, unpleasant episode in

the history of periodical literature? Not at all. "What becomes of all my virtue," asks Mrs. Lynn Linton, "if I can't put some of it into a magazine? I have such a lot on hand." Let us follow the arguments which she brings to the help of the institution of Matrimony.

The more complicated society becomes (says she) the more do the pitfalls and hardships of marriage increase. Among primitive peoples (by carefully excluding the polygamous and the polyandrous, be it said) we find monogamy; and marriage amid monogamous savages means simply the continuance of the race and a certain kind of community of aid. The brave fights, hunts, fishes; the squaw cooks the food he catches, and looks after the children. She is as good to him as any other woman would be, and habit weights the scale in her favour. As for her, as long as the brave fights, hunts, and fishes as well as his fellows, she has no wish to change. Hence arises the sentiment that a man's honour is implicated in his wife's inconstancy. If he were as good as his fellows, why should she prefer another man?

But when human nature becomes more complex, the most polished society ends where the most brutal begins—in practical polygamy and polyandry (at which end Mrs. Lynn Linton would put the Turk is not evident). And in this polished society it is woman who, in the great proportion of cases, seeks relief from the marriage tie and prefers discursiveness; for this main reason—a man is sated with "life" by the time he marries, while a woman is still full of "curiosity." And this is a nervous age, and peculiarly apt to develop "curiosity" in woman.

All this is stated with much solemnity: and we are not concerned here to deny its truth. But it really seems worth while—if by so doing we can help to dissuade Mrs. Lynn Linton from writing any more on the subject—to assure her that, in spite of it, civilised nations are not going to put an end to the marriage tie. And the ground of our assurance is this, that in civilised nations, nowadays, the corrupt upper classes have nothing to do with legislation. That is the business of the great middle classes, who love the institution of Matrimony. They ought to do so, for they invented it, as they invented poetry; and (we may add) imposed both poetry and monogamy on their social superiors who never fully understood either the one or the other, but accepted the two perforce. And if our own upper classes, for instance, could not unloose the marriage tie in the days of Charles II., still less will they dare to do so nowadays when respect for middle-class opinion means votes. Indeed, in accordance with the prevalent opinion that education works upwards, we may look forward to a blessed time when every Primrose Dame will be bound to eschew "discursiveness" as a necessary step towards winning the confidence of the electorate.

"ENTER A CROWD" (STAGE DIRECTION).

YOUR dramatic critic "A. B. W." (a theatre manager writes to us) finds that between us we do not produce one literary play a year. Well, perhaps we do not, and yet maybe we could say something in our defence if we had the skill. "Ah, but you have not!" roar the authors of 999 unacted literary plays; "you cannot write, for you were all greengrocers or butter-merchants until the day before yesterday." This charge has been so often brought against us that I suppose it must be true. Let it then be admitted that I am an ex-greengrocer. That will excuse my bad spelling (you should see the spelling in some literary plays, though) and still leave me free to reply to "A. B. W." (I know who he is, but please don't tell him who I am.)

Are really literary men who write plays millionaires? They don't look it when I meet them, which is as seldom as possible; and yet I sometimes think

they must be, from the splendour of their stage directions. "Enter a crowd" I have written at the top of this letter, just as a specimen. It might have been "Enter a number of ladies and gentlemen," or "Enter a ship's crew," or even "Enter an army." Now, for a really literary dramatist to write "Enter a crowd" is as easy as for me to sit down at my desk and write out cheques for a thousand pounds each to all my friends. (I have only £600 in the bank.) It is also as cheap; but, though it may be literary, it is not business. With one dip of his pen your really literary dramatist adds, say, three thousand pounds to my expenses, for his crowd must not only be paid, but clothed. What is more serious still, the literary dramatist's plays are what we greengrocers call "costume-pieces" (he scorns these technical terms)—and every item of his crowd has to be put into knee-breeches. Suppose the play produced: down sweeps "A. B. W." on that crowd, and tears me to tatters because I have attired it in the dress of 1830 instead of that of 1840. Nine times in ten the crowd may be dispensed with by changing "Enter a crowd" into "The crowd is heard shouting outside." Indeed, the artistic effect may even be much better. But though the literary dramatist seldom walks haughtily away with his play in his pocket because I have dared to suggest this alteration, he resents it, and calls me a miser beneath his breath. The chances are that I suggest the alteration, as making the play more suitable for other managers. This is my polite way of declining his piece; but unless I accept it, courtesy is thrown away on him. He tells all his friends that I led him to believe I had accepted the piece, and then they all cry, like a crowd, "Down with the greengrocer!" Shortly afterwards I produce a new piece by a well-known unliterary dramatist, and then your literary gentleman writes to the papers accusing us of plagiarism. He hints that I gave his play to the unliterary man to "take the good things out of it," and his proof is that in both pieces some character hides in a closet. Your literary dramatist complains that we keep his play six months and then reject it. I can assure you that we consider ourselves lucky if the literary dramatist ceases to trouble us in six months after we have the honour of making his acquaintance.

Not all literary dramatists, be it allowed, are particular about details. The other day I had a domestic drama from one of them who looks on "comic relief" (another of our greengrocery terms) as a trifle that is unworthy his own attention. "Here," he writes in his second act, "introduce a bright comedy scene." This is a stage direction for my benefit. I can assure you the author is a really literary dramatist, for he enclosed, with the play, a letter saying so. Sometimes they do not say so themselves. They leave me to find it out, and I do find it out in five minutes. You may ask, How? It is not from the fine style (for what does a greengrocer know about style?), nor from the author's name (for we greengrocers read no books). No; it is from the want of technical knowledge, which I perceive after glancing at the first page. In my early days of management, when I treated merely literary dramatists as reasonable men, I used to say to them, "Of course, you have studied stage construction?" "Certainly," they always answered. "Then tell me what 'Exit King 42 E' means," I said. But two in a dozen could tell me. They could only mutter "The wretched greengrocers!" "If you don't understand these terms," I would continue (wasting my time), "I am afraid I won't understand your play." "Oh," they would reply, "we have been very particular about exits and entrances." I would then open their piece at random, and be met by this specimen of their stage directions: "In the meantime Rose and Gerald have made their exit." I wonder where I could find an actor and an actress willing to make their exit "in the meantime." Again, there is the length of literary plays. About half of those that reach me are twice

too long, and not one in twenty is playable as it stands. This condensation, I suppose, is the great difficulty. It takes a literary dramatist who attends to his stage instruction a page to get any character off the stage. His lovers need twelve sentences to say good-bye till next act; and his servants are not dismissed in less than seven. The experienced dramatist (but of course he is not literary) parts his lovers with a kiss, and sends off his servants with a stamp of the foot.

But what business, say the 999, have I to talk about their plays, when it is notorious that I never read them? Well, I have shown that it is not necessary to read many of them. But I do take trouble with them. I have a secretary who spends at least half of his time in looking through them with the object of discovering whether there is a possible one among them. If he thinks there is, he hands it to me, and then I read it carefully. But the 999, who know of that secretary, give me no credit for him. They have the most complete disbelief both in his judgment and his honesty, and their grand endeavour is to put their play direct into my hands, greengrocer though I am. In my early days of management I would not believe, when they forced their way into my room, that they were calling me a greengrocer beneath their breath. You have no idea how uncomplimentary they are. The reason they bring their piece to me in the first instance is that I am the only man in London who can play the chief part. Mr. Irving would overdo it and Mr. Tree would underdo it, but I would strike the happy medium. As—they thought me simply wonderful, and as—I had no rival. Irving? Bah! Tree? Yah! They knew Messrs. Irving and Tree and I are not unacquainted, but that does not prevent their making light of these gentlemen's capacity before me. They are sure it will "go down" the better. And why? Because we are all greengrocers.

A RAMBLER IN LONDON.

XXX.—COVENT GARDEN.

I HAVE noticed that the great writers have a tendency to go to Covent Garden in the early morning and find poetry there. They never go at any other time; later on in the day there is less poetry; nor are there so many potatoes. Thus think, ing, I set my alarum clock for 2.30 a.m. I, too, wanted to catch the poetry of the thing. I wanted to watch the waggons rolling along in the yellow lamplight, and to hear the sort of language that the simple carters use about the state of the roads. I wanted to drink the beauty of the great white lilies. Mushrooms, too, are a pretty kind of flower. They are full of appeal: and yet some people eat pepper with them. On these wintry days the flesh is exceedingly weak, and I did not rise as early as I had intended. In fact, the morning was one of those unsatisfactory mornings when breakfast is even as luncheon, and one has to leave out all the things one ought to do, in order to get enough time for the things one ought to leave undone. However, I got to Covent Garden, and found, as I had expected, that I was too late. There was very little poetry; probably it had all been snapped up by great writers in the small hours.

Outside the market there was a curious blend of tarpaulins, empty baskets, and Christmas-trees. A boy was loading a cart with empty baskets. He carried half a dozen of them, piled one on the top of another, with apparent ease; he also spilled them all, at which I was more pleased than he. In fact, I had to go inside among the shops to conceal a joy which I felt to be indecent. It was here that I found the great white lilies, the arum lilies, which members of the middle class use so profusely in times of bereavement. There were yellow crocuses, too,